how a resurrection really feels by bisexualfpjones

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Summary:

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how a resurrection really feels

Author's Note:

> this is a tumblr prompt from a year ago and i havent looked at it since lmao so... be kind be gentle. just wanna get all my writing moved onto here
>
> title is from the song of the same name by the hold steady (though i stole it from a one tree hill episode thank you so much)

steve had no intentions of visiting billy at the hospital in the beginning. it was too awkward. sure, maybe he had just watched the guy sacrifice himself for the greater good but… it wasn't like they were friends. they'd barely even spoken two words to each other since that night at the byers'; billy seemingly having gone out of his way to leave Steve alone.

it had been a relief, at first. but once his face healed up and the dust settled down steve found himself kind of missing the attention. it wasn't like he was getting it from anywhere else. he knew it was fucked up, but what the hell else in his life wasn't recently?

he had only started coming by as a favor to max; she had needed a ride and apparently nobody else had been available so. steve drove her. he had sat in his car for a few minutes after max had already run off inside. visiting billy never really seemed like an option, but sitting out in front of the hospital, knowing he was inside… it just seemed like the right thing to do at the time.

so he had gone in. he wasn't entirely surprised to see an unconscious billy lying before him, he had known from max's updates that billy still had yet to wake up, but still. it was unnerving. the guy had lived his life being so loud and in everyone's faces, and seeing him in that bed so quiet, so still… it was like steve had stepped into the twilight zone or something.

but for as uncomfortable as it was, it kind of made the visits easier. steve had started offering to take max to the hospital when her

parents weren't around and he would stay with her. he had said it was because it just made more sense to stay with her and wait than having to leave and come back later, but they both knew that wasn't entirely true. and eventually he just started coming on his own.

steve knew he only did this because billy wasn't awake, wasn't aware, because he didn't have to deal with the awkwardness of billy talking and asking questions about why steve was there in the first place. and maybe he felt a little guilty about it, but… it was what it was. this was his secret to keep.

but then billy wakes up on a friday. steve doesn't find out until saturday, and it takes him til thursday to muster up the courage to go see him.

max should be at school, and for all his visits before, steve's never really seen billy's dad around (which still totally hasn't been explained to him. max kept her response pretty clipped when he'd tried asking. so he figured he shouldn't push) so he figures he's in the clear. he sneaks by the door just in case, stealthily trying to see if anyone else is in the room before he enters. it seems safe.

he lingers outside for a minute, hand hovering over the handle. he wonders briefly if maybe he should've brought something. flowers? a 'get well soon' card? but it feels too weird. so he resigns to going in empty handed, takes a deep breath and opens the door.

he doesn't know what to expect, but when he walks in to the room he can't help but feel like there's no difference from before. it's still eerily quiet. the blinds are shut so the room is dark despite the afternoon sun shining outside. the tv's on but there's no noise. everything's just… still.

billy doesn't even react to having a visitor. steve takes one look at him and thinks he must be sleeping. he wonders if he should come back, try a different day. he turns to look at the door, wonders when he should try again, when he hears it.

"am i dreaming or is that you, harrington?"

his voice comes out low and rough, like it hasn't been used despite

the fact he's been awake for almost a week. it throws steve off, but when he turns back to look at him he sees a faint smirk on the other boy's lips. if steve's being honest, it kind of relaxes him. makes him feel better about this whole situation. nothing about this situation is normal but… this kind of is.

"yeah, it's me. don't cream your pants," steve finishes, but this time he doesn't say it bored and unimpressed. he's smiling.

billy laughs, or tries to. ends up in a coughing fit and steve's rushing over to pour a glass of water from the pitcher that's been left behind on the bedside tray. he doesn't know if he should just hand the cup over or do it himself. he goes back and forth in his mind about it for a few seconds before ultimately bringing the cup up to billy's lips, careful not to spill.

billy licks his lips once steve pulls the cup away, looks up at him. "i'm not crippled. i can still get my own water."

steve feels embarrassed, but when he looks at billy it doesn't look like he's actually angry. "right. yeah. sorry," steve finds himself apologizing anyway.

there's an awkward silence that fills the room after. even though he knew billy was awake and that this visit would be different he still never actually planned for what the hell they were supposed to talk about. he should've just never bothered coming in the first place. he should've just-

"why are you here?" billy asks suddenly, catching steve off guard.

"i thought you were dead," is the brilliant response steve comes up with. it's not what he meant to say, and fuck… "i mean, we thought, all of us- it looked pretty bad, man."

"this your way of saying you care about me, harrington?"

steve can tell this is billy trying to put on that old bravado from last year, but it falls short what with the way he looks so tired and beaten in that hospital bed. it almost makes steve's heart ache for reasons he's not entirely sure of.

he could play along, pretend like things aren't as serious as they are, but… it doesn't feel right. not after everything. "you went through a lot, billy. more than anyone should have to."

something in billy's face shifts then, and he takes his eyes off steve to look elsewhere. "yeah. well. maybe i had it coming."

"billy-"

"i'm sorry. for last year. that night…" when billy looks at steve again there's water in his eyes, but it's like he's fighting not to shed a tear. "for all of it. it wasn't… about you. it was never about you."

and of all the ways for today to have gone, steve certainly never expected that. it leaves him a little breathless, if he's honest. "yeah. that's um- water under the bridge, or whatever."

"you always this easy to forgive people who beat you up?"

steve has to laugh at that. "uh, yeah, actually. you'd be surprised."

"might be something to work on," billy jokes, but steve can see the relief in his eyes.

another silence falls between them, but it's comfortable this time, only interrupted when the sound of footsteps come near the door and soon max is making her appearance. she regards steve briefly like she's surprised to see him, but otherwise heads straight to billy's bed and takes a seat at the foot of it.

"how'd you get here?" steve asks.

"asked lucas' mom to drop me off. tried calling you first but you weren't home," max shrugs as she's opening up her backpack and pulling out a book that she hands over to billy. "oh, shit, i forgot the reeses!" max goes to get up but steve stops her.

"i can go get it. you guys want anything else?"

"well since you're up-" billy starts but is cut off when max pinches his leg.

“don’t be an asshole.”

“alright, alright. fine,” billy laughs, more careful this time so he doesn’t set off another coughing fit.

steve takes in the sight before him: billy and max getting along, goofing around. it just adds to the surrealness that has become his entire life. but it’s nice. he feels, for the first time in a long while, genuine hope that something better’s about to come. to all of them. and he can’t wait to see what it is.

Author's Note:

> comments and kudos much appreciated! you can find me on tumblr @fredsythe also i have other harringrove works on here (2) that are hopefully a lot better than this if you wanna check those out lmao k bye